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SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVES MUZITO GOVERNMENT

REF: KINSHASA 933

**¶1.** (U) Summary: The National Assembly approved the government of Prime Minister Adolphe Muzito on November 2. The government easily obtained the necessary absolute majority vote following intense debate during an emergency plenary session of parliament. Muzito stressed reinforcing state authority, the implementation of development priorities, and the improvement of living standards in his presentation to the Assembly. Opposition deputies criticized the lack of details in the plan and the rushed nature of the confirmation proceedings. Major changes in the Muzito government include the creation of three Deputy Prime Minister posts to coordinate the government's security and development priorities; the creation of new ministerial posts for decentralization and human rights, and new ministers at Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs.

The economic team remains largely unchanged. Muzito will face early challenges in managing the crises in the east and the 2009 budgetary process. End summary.

Priorities: Security, Development, Social Services

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**¶2.** (U) The National Assembly, meeting in an emergency session early in the morning of November 2, approved the government of Prime Minister-designate Adolphe Muzito (reftel). Deputies approved the new government, the third government since the 2006 elections, by a vote of 294 to 67, with seven abstentions. The vote punctuated a marathon debate of eleven hours following the presentation to the Assembly the previous day of Muzito's official program.

**¶3.** (U) Appearing before the Assembly October 31, Muzito presented the new government's agenda for resolving the short term security and humanitarian crisis in the east and the long term growth and development challenges facing the DRC. He outlined the new government's three primary themes: re-establishment of state authority to promote peace and national unity; implementation of the five development priorities ("cinq chantiers" in French); and improvement of living standards through the provision of basic social services. Muzito said the government would achieve the three priorities through a comprehensive strategy of good governance.

**¶4.** (U) Opposition deputies criticized the debate on procedural grounds, notably the examination, discussion, and approval of the government program in a compressed time schedule. The opposition also criticized the lack of clear signals and specific details, seen by some as a clear break with the outgoing Gizenga government.

Three New Deputy Prime Ministers

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**¶5.** (SBU) Muzito's government reflects important structural and personnel changes in the defense, security, governance and development sectors, while ministers in the principal economic and fiscal dossiers remained mostly unchanged. The broadest structural change is the creation of three new Deputy Prime Minister posts: Basic Social Needs (Francois Mobutu Nzanga); Reconstruction (Emile

Bongeli); and Defense and Security (Mutombo Bakafwa Nsenda). Leading coalition partner PPRD ("Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la democratie" in French) Secretary General Evariste Boshab told Poloffs October 28 that the creation of the new positions would allow the Deputy Prime Ministers to focus on overall coordination within their respective portfolios. In a surprising move, the portfolio for decentralization, one of the most contentious and long-awaited Constitutional changes, was removed from the Ministry of Interior and placed in its own ministry. Additionally, a new ministerial position was created for human rights.

Defense, Interior Ministers Sacked; Econ Team Stays

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**¶6.** (U) Key personnel changes include the sacking of Chikez Diemu and Denis Kalume at the Ministries of Defense and Interior, replaced by Charles Mwando Nsimba and Celestin Mbuyu Kabangu, respectively. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is under new leadership as well, that of Alexis Thambwe Mwamba. The retention of the Ministers of Finance (Athanase Matenda), Economy (Andre Futa), Plan (Olivier Kamitatu), and State-Owned Enterprises (Jeanine Mabunda) will keep intact the GDRC teams that have interacted with donors since the November 2007 cabinet reshuffle. The mining review process will likely continue under the extended mandate of Minister of Mines Martin Kabwelulu. The new Human Rights Ministry is headed by Upio Kakura, a former National Assembly Deputy and President of the Parliamentary Network for Human Rights (Note: Kakura endorsed the parliamentary bill to establish the High Council of Magistrates, a controversial piece of legislation essential to the creation of an independent judiciary. The legislation was supported through USAID's justice programs. End note.).

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Regional Representation is a Factor

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**¶7.** (SBU) The nomination of Katangans and Kabilia allies to control the Ministries of Defense, Interior, Mines, and Foreign Affairs reinforces the importance of regional origin and loyalty as a critical factor in selecting ministerial candidates. Both Mwando Nsimba and Kabangu are from Katanga, as is Kabilia. (Note: Mwando Nsimba, former President of the Transitional Assembly's Political, Administrative and Judicial Commission, was a respected and close former USAID partner.) It also worth pointing out, however that Defense Minister Chikez, although from Katanga, was not retained, undoubtedly because his performance as defense minister was in part responsible for the collapse of the nation's armed forces. New foreign minister Alexis Thambwe Mwamba is from Maniema province (Note: Kabilia's mother and mother-in-law are from Maniema. End note). North Kivu sources were surprised by the large representation of eastern Congolese in the Cabinet, including the nomination of Safi Adiki as Rural Development Minister. Adiki is a representative of the ethnic Tutsi population and formerly with the office of the governor of North Kivu.

**¶8.** (SBU) Comment: The lengthy period between the Gizenga resignation (September 25), Muzito's nomination (October 10) and the presentation of the government to the National Assembly (October 31) is in stark contrast to the Assembly's rapid discussion, debate, and approval of the government (November 1-2). Such a lengthy period belied the urgent security situation in the Kivus and in the Ituri district of the Orientale Province, which present the Muzito government with its most pressing challenges. The retention of the primary budgetary, economic and fiscal ministers will likely ensure continuity with donor coordination teams and familiarity with critical portfolios during the 2009 budget examination process. This continuity is critical as the GDRC addresses donor concerns over the multi-billion China agreement and takes steps towards a new IMF program. At the same time, the GDRC must do more to address discontent over the high cost of living and the perceived lack of attention to the basic economic needs of the population. The most significant changes are in the defense and security sectors, unsurprising in light of the recent poor performance of the FARDC against armed groups in the east. Finally, the creation of the

three Deputy Prime Minister positions tracks closely with Kabila's five development priorities program, although the primary criticism of the Gizenga government was one not of structure, but of political will. End comment.

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